NUM. I.

THE PLAIN DEALER.

Pulvis & Umbra ſumus. —— HOR.

FRIDAY, APRIL 23. 1725.

AMONG a numberleſs Variety of *Similitudes*, by which the Different Wits of Poets, Satiriſts, Philoſophers, and Divines, have endeavour'd to expreſs the Shortneſs, and Inſignificance, of Human Life, I am moſt pleas'd with that of *Lucian*, where he compares it to thoſe little Bubbles, which are made by a Shower of Rain, that falls upon ſome Lake or River; where they are broken, as faſt as they are form'd, and give way to others, that immediately follow them.

There is, in this Compariſon, the *Emptineſs*, the *Smoke*, and the *Buſtle*, as well as the *Weakneſs*, and *Brevity* of Life: It is, methinks, a very mortifying Picture of That *Step, half ſtridden*, That *Sporting-Field of Fortune*, which St. *Auguſtin* has, ſo comprehenſively, explain'd himſelf upon, when he ſays, "It "is a Life, ebbing with Doubts, flowing with Hopes, "and beaten by Miſeries; puff'd up with Luxury, and "made lean by Abſtinence: Diſtracted by Wiſhes, "ſharpen'd by Cares, and blunted by Indolence; ar-"rogant in Youth, peeviſh in Age; reſtleſs in Health, "and impatient in Sickneſs: And, at laſt, ſo over-"clouded by *Death*, that, *Ceaſing to be*, one would "think, *It never was.*"

I was inſenſibly attracted to this Subject, by my Peruſal of Three *Epitaphs*, widely differing in their Deſigns: For the Firſt excites *Humility* in High-Life, The Second adviſes *Retirement*, and The Third inflames to *Glory*.

That which recommends Humility to the Poſſeſſors of Power, and Dignity, is the Tranſlation of a *Latin* Inſcription, on the Monument of a Duke of *Brunſwick*, in the Cathedral Church of that City.

Here, Great, and Good, Duke HENRY *buried lies:*
O'er their dead Founder *theſe proud Arches riſe.*
His pious Conſort, *too* (*the* Poor's *ſafe Guide*)
Mix'd with his Duſt, *clings* cloſer *to his Side*:
MATILDA, *Daughter to Great* England's *King!*
Whoſe Virtues, ſpite of Death, *ſtill* bloom *in Spring.*
King OTHO, *too, their Son, here, ſhares their Reſt;*
By both fond Parents Arms, again, poſſeſs'd.
And, here, — O Grief of Beauty! — near him, lies,
The Charmer *of his* Heart, *and all Mens* Eyes!
That lovely Form, whoſe Smiles inflam'd Deſire,
Here, Food for Worms, can no ſoft Woes *inſpire.*

Thou, Paſſenger, whoſe Eyes this Marble *view,*
Learn to be Wiſe; *nor* fleeting *Hopes purſue:*
Life is an Ev'ning Breeze; a murm'ring Breath;
That blows, till Sun-ſet, *then grows* calm, *in Death.*

The Second Epitaph (which recommends, as I ſaid, a *retir'd Life*) is that of *Similis*, a Military Officer, of great Experience, in the Time of the Emperor *Adrian*; who obtain'd Leave, with no ſmall Difficulty, to retire, at laſt, into the Country; and living there, but *Seven Years*, in a quiet, and peaceful Privacy, enjoy'd more ſolid Satisfaction, than he had ever reap'd before, from all his long Life, ſpent in Hurry, Danger, and Diſtinction: So that, coming, at laſt, to *die*, he appointed by his *Will*, this Epitaph.

Shou'd Curious Readers wiſh to know,
Whoſe Duſt their Feet are preſſing;
SIMILIS, *fam'd in War, lies low,*
His Country's Boaſt, and Bleſſing.
Long did he Toil, and Graſp, and Strive,
Yet loſt *his* Time, *he fears;*
For, tho', till Seventy-Six, ALIVE,
He LIV'D, *but* Seven *ſhort Years.*

The Third Epitaph, to give it at once, the higheſt Praiſe which *can* be given it, is worthy its illuſtrious Subject, the Great CZAR of RUSSIA. It was ſent me by a Gentleman, to whoſe Hands it came, in *Latin*. But I was ſo juſtly charm'd with the Sublimity of the Sentiments, that I could not reſiſt the Temptation of giving it to the Ladies, and other *Engliſh* Readers, in their own native Language; be-

cauſe

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cauſe I would have none of them robb'd of the Pleaſure, which I receiv'd, in peruſing it.

Hic jacent
Reliquiæ, vix mortales,
PETRI ALEXOWITZ,
Russiarum Imperatoris haud opus eſt dicere,
Honorem enim iſti Diademati addidit, non recepit.
Taceat Antiquitas,
Cedat Alexander,
Cedat Cæsar;
Se facilem præbet Victoria
Heroum Ductoribus,
Milites vinci neſcios Imperantibus;
Sed Ille,
Qui in morte ſolâ requieſcit,
Non Famæ avidos,
Non Bello peritiſſimos,
——Non homines Mortem temnentes,
Sed Bruta, vixq; humani nominis dignos Subditos
Invenit;
Etiam hos, compatriis urſis ſimillimos, & averſantes,
Expolivit;
Barbaritatis Hæreditariæ tenebras ille Phœbus fugavit;
Et propriâ virtute Germanorum Victores vicit.
Alii feliciſſimè Exercitus duxerunt, Hic creavit.
Erubeſce, Ars!
Hic Vir Maximus tibi nihil debuit:
Exulta, Natura!
Hoc Stupendium tuum eſt.

Here under Depoſited
Lies All that con'd die, of a Man Immortal;
PETER ALEXIOVITZ:
It is almoſt ſuperfluous to add,
Great Emperor of Russia:
A Title!
Which, inſtead of adding to his Glory,
Became Glorious by His wearing it.
Let Antiquity be dumb,
Nor boaſt her Alexander,
Or her Cæsar:
How eaſy was Victory
To Leaders, who were follow'd by Heroes!
And whoſe Soldiers felt a noble Diſdain,
To be thought leſs awake than their Generals!
But HE,
Who, in this Place, firſt, knew Reſt,
Found Subjects Baſe, and Unactive,
Unwarlike, Unlearn'd, Untractable,
Neither covetous of Fame,
Nor liberal of Danger;
Creatures, with the Names of Men,
But with Qualities rather Brutal than Rational:
Yet, even Theſe,
He poliſh'd from their Native Ruggedneſs,
And, breaking out, like a New Sun,
To illuminate the Minds of a People,
Diſpell'd their Night of Hereditary Darkneſs:
'Till, by Force of His invincible Influence,
He had taught them to conquer,
Even the Conquerors of Germany.
Other Princes have commanded Victorious Armies,
This Commander created them!
Bluſh, O Art!
At a Hero, who ow'd Thee Nothing.
Exult, O Nature!
For Thine was This Prodigy.

I will end with a ſhort Collection of Sentences, which a Writer, of the laſt Century, aſſures us, he had copied out of the Pocket-Book of an *Elector*, of the *German* Empire; where he found it inſerted, in That Prince's own Hand-writing. ——Life *is ſhort*, Beauty *Deceitful*, Riches *Uncertain*, Dominion *Invidious*, Victory *Doubtful*, Youth *Reſtleſs*, Old Age *Miſerable*; —— DEATH, *only, is* HAPPY, *and the* FAME *of* WISDOM *Everlaſting!*

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